

Ask a seasoned traveler like retired assistant controller Loren Deer what his idea of an unusual and exciting trip would be and he will probably answer an African safari. He recently spent over two weeks trekking through the wilds of Kenya observing and photographing gazelles, zebras, lions, rhinos, hippos, elephants, giraffes, wildebeasts, warthogs and batedared foxes.

"This is something I've wanted to do all of my life," Deer says. "When the trip came around I said here's my chance. I had a wonderful time. Except for bumping around in the minivans, it was a pretty easy trip."

Deer belongs to a travel group called the Nomads. This group owns their own plane and has its own volunteer flight crew whose payment is to enjoy the trip free of charge. They cook their own in-flight meals, do all of the planning

## African safari a mixture of wild animals, bumpy roads, and good food

and in short, pamper their members. The cost of the East African Safari, including flights and all transportation, accommodations, three meals a day and gratuities, was \$2,300.

During the trip, the group was taken from place to place in minivans. They visited four major game parks, each with a specific terrain and animal population. The Masai Mara is noted for its vast plains and migrating herds. Samburu has gerenuks, reticulated giraffes, grevy zebras and a

fabulous array of bird life. Amboseli is close to Mt. Kilimanjaro and boasts lions, cheetahs, rhinos, elephants and giraffes. Tsavo West is a vast, rugged terrain and the largest elephant population resides here, plus herds of cape buffalo.

While touring the different areas of Kenya the Nomads saw various tribes, none of which are civilized. "Many of the tribes are nomadic people who won't accept civilization. You are not allowed to photograph them, but we paid a group of them about \$7 and they stood around while we took their pictures. They live in small huts made from cow dung and manure. Most of the natives live communal style."

In all of the national parks and game reserves, the animals are protected against game hunters and in fact, humans must yield for the animals in most situations. Here, the people are guests among the animals.

"They have poaching way down," Deer says. "The middle easterners like to collect the bump from the rhino's nose. They use it as an aphrodisiac in that part of the country. And of course, everyone wants the ivory tusks from the elephants. The Muslims used to hide in the bushes and mow down the animals with machine guns. But they have Masai park rangers who keep everything pretty well patrolled."

The wandering tribes that go from watering hole to watering hole, have great herds of cattle, but



Female nomad children stand amid their village of cow dung and manure huts. All females in this tribe wear huge, exotic necklaces as part of their garb. These villages are surrounded with thorn bushes to keep the animals out.

**On Cover:** Just about everyone, including retiree Loren Deer in the center, purchases and wears a safari hat as part of their daily garb on safari in East Africa.



Downtown

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